

As a traveler and aviation enthusiast, I have always enjoyed flying commercially. However, in addition to loving airplanes, I have always appreciated walking on the plane and knowing for the next few hours I could enjoy relative peace and quiet. It seems that once the instructions are given to turn off all cellular telephones, the whole world changes.

At work, in the store, out to dinner, at football games (although I've never believed anyone could hear too well while talking at those), and just about everywhere else, people at constantly talking on their cellular phones. Even places that used to be quiet--the beach, the golf course, school plays--have somehow been taken over by ringing cell phones and loud talkers.

No one regular citizen needs to be on the phone every minute of their life, or have the opportunity to do so. I know that everyone would say, "Well I have to keep up to date with things at work," or "I'm trying to get a hold of someone?" All I can say is this: #1) Somehow we're surviving without being able to talk on airplanes now, we haven't gotten fired over it, and the world keeps going. #2) Just wait until the plane lands and then call everyone you need to as fast as you can, and keep talking while you get your bags, hail a taxi, eat dinner, and check in at your hotel, and #3) If you can't live life for an hour without being on the phone, I think that you need to look at your life and see if that's how you want it to be.

What is the point in making the airplane's engines quieter? Why have better insulation in the fuselage? Why do anything like this if 50 or 100 or 300 people could be talking on telephones. Do you think that those busy talking will see the fasten seat belt sign or hear announcements by the pilot or flight attendants? Do you think the poor person sitting next to them will ever want to fly again after two hours of hearing about how Stephanie's hair looked or how much the new merger will change things at the company? Would you?

I've accepted the world's addiction to cellular phone and am in no way trying to advocate a reduction in their use. But as of today, the only places I can go and be guaranteed a cell phone-free environment is in the mountains (no service), the ocean (no service), or an airplane. I hope that those don't go away.

A USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll from earlier this year determined that nearly 70 percent of both frequent or occasional fliers want the FCC and FAA to maintain the ban on cellular phone usage on airborne aircraft. As a cellular phone user, a frequent flier, and a busy employee, I hope that no matter how much technology is developed, I can get onto an airplane and go to sleep without being woken up by a ringing phone.

If we allow travelers to use their phone while flying, I hope that the flight attendant can hear me over all the noise. I hope I never miss an important announcement because I had to jam earplugs in my ears so that I wouldn't have to listen to the man or woman next to me go through all 200 ring tones on their phone. I hope that we don't all get sick from the high concentrations of second-hand electromagnetic radiation. I hope the struggling airlines

don't go bankrupt because so many people stop flying instead of subjecting themselves to a claustrophobic, loud environment that they can't leave.

I hope the FCC keeps airplanes quiet, our travelers happy and safe, and our airlines in business.